AISI

Alberta Initiative for School Improvement

PART I

AISI Administrative Handbook for Cycle 2

2003 – 2006

PART II

Framework for the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement

December 1999

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Alberta Initiative for School Improvement

PART I

AISI Administrative Handbook for Cycle 2 2003 – 2006

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Foreword

The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) is a bold approach to improving student learning by encouraging teachers, parents and the community to work collaboratively to introduce innovative projects that address local needs. Initiated in 1999, AISI provides targeted funding to school authorities to improve student learning and performance. More than $200 million has been invested in this initiative to continuously improve student learning in Alberta. After a successful initial three-year cycle of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (2000-2003), AISI is now in its second cycle, 2003-2006.

The purpose of this *AISI Handbook for Cycle 2* is to provide school authorities with the provincial and local requirements and processes for planning, funding, implementing, managing, evaluating, reporting and sharing school improvement projects.

The Alberta government, together with its partners, released the framework and administrative requirements for AISI in December 1999. The goal of AISI is to improve student learning and performance by fostering initiatives that reflect the unique needs and circumstances within school jurisdictions.

The first cycle of AISI ran from 2000 to 2003. School authorities (public, separate, Francophone, charter and private) initiated more than 800 projects to improve student learning that addressed local needs and circumstances. The results of these projects are on the AISI website at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/special/aisi

School improvement focuses on improving student learning through fostering enhanced strategies at the school, district, and government levels. Essential elements to promote school improvement include leadership, instructional practice, school climate, assessment and accountability, building capacity through professional development, student and parent engagement, and integration of effective practices.

As school improvement projects require substantial effort by all involved, this handbook has been designed as a reference to assist school authorities in planning and implementing sustainable AISI improvement projects.

The handbook has seven sections. The first describes the attributes/characteristics of AISI. The second summarizes what research tells us about how to improve student learning. Sections III to V describe the requirements for developing AISI projects and reporting annual results. Section VI provides AISI contact information and Section VII identifies the forms that are available on the AISI Extranet Site.

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- Alberta Learning
- Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)
- Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)
- Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA)
- College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS)
- University Faculties of Education

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I. AISI Fundamentals

AISI is a unique improvement initiative. The following attributes/characteristics are fundamental to the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI).

1. ***Partnership*** – AISI is a partnership among teachers, superintendents, trustees, business officials, universities, parents, and government. The AISI partnership is characterized by trust, collaboration, and teamwork among the education partners who share a commitment to improving education for Alberta students, who are the beneficiaries of this strong and diverse partnership. By working together, the partners continue to develop new relationships, strategies, and practices that provide long-term benefits to teaching and learning in our province.

2. ***Catalyst*** – AISI is a catalyst for change. The common goal, targeted funding, partnership, positive climate, and supportive infrastructure act in concert to achieve significant change in teaching and learning.

3. ***Student focused*** – AISI communicates a compelling commitment to school improvement that aligns with the long-term vision of Alberta Learning. Students are active and engaged learners. AISI projects continue to strengthen the focus on student learning and accommodate the diverse learning needs of individual students and special populations.

4. ***Flexibility*** – The AISI goal is to improve student learning and performance by fostering initiatives that reflect the unique needs and circumstances within school authorities. School authorities, in consultation with teachers, staff, parents and other stakeholders, choose strategies that enhance learning in the local context.

5. ***Collaboration*** – Collaboration is an essential element for school improvement. Projects are developed and implemented with meaningful involvement of the school community. The active engagement of teachers, staff and students, with the support of parents and partners is critical to project success.

6. ***Culture of Continuous Improvement*** – AISI promotes a culture of continuous improvement that is evident in schools and jurisdictions that have a clear alignment between school improvement goals and classroom practices. Schools operating as professional learning communities actively engage both teachers and students in learning. Continuous improvement is a shared responsibility. Professional development and ongoing administrative support are critical components in realizing continuous improvement within schools and school systems.

7. ***Evidence-based Practice*** – Evidence that educational practices benefit student learning and performance, through the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, is foundational to AISI. The use of multiple methods and data sources gives Albertans confidence in the results. As the body of evidence on successful practices grows, integration of these practices in new contexts will be the challenge and the promise of AISI.

8. ***Research-based Interventions*** – Solid research provides a reasonable expectation that improvement will occur. Implementation of effective instructional strategies is core to AISI projects. AISI is a vehicle for testing the efficacy of these interventions in the Alberta context.

9. ***Inquiry and Reflection*** – Many factors affect student learning. A clear focus on student learning is the foundation for inquiry and reflection. Inquiry and reflection lead to improved understanding and thoughtful changes to instructional practice. Analyzing strategies that worked and building on them leads to continuous improvement. Strategies that did not work as expected can provide important information about what needs to change and what might be successful.

10. ***Building Capacity and Integrating Effective Practices*** – Professional development continues to ensure that teachers and students benefit from the emerging knowledge, practices, and technologies that are being developed through AISI. Effective PD is planned, systemic and sustained. Promising practices, tools, products and processes developed and/or acquired through AISI will benefit Alberta's students in the future.

11. ***Knowledge*** – AISI contributes to the body of knowledge about teaching, learning, and instructional improvement. The AISI family shares this knowledge widely through conferences, reports, the Clearinghouse, and provincial networking sessions.

II. Improving Student Learning

There is a large body of evidence on how to improve student learning and schools. Relevant literature comes from a number of areas including psychology, sociology, and education. School improvement focuses on improving student learning through fostering enhanced strategies at the school, district, and government levels. Some of the evidence-based findings follow.

1. Students learn best when they are actively engaged in activities that are important and meaningful to them. Accomplishing a task independently constitutes learning. Brain research indicates that emotion is the gatekeeper to learning, intellectual functioning is greatly impacted by experience, and personal meaning is the key to memory.

2. All levels of the education system must work together: government, districts, and schools. Government must establish and align goals, policies, curricula, and accountability processes; districts must implement provincial directions and provide leadership and support to their schools, and schools must deliver effective instruction to their students.

3. Effective schools encompass effective leadership and teaching; a focus on learning; a positive school climate and culture; high expectations for both staff and students; emphasizing student responsibilities and rights; monitoring progress of students, classes, and the school; developing staff skills on site; and engaging parents in appropriate ways.

4. Leadership occurs at all levels and should be shared. Building a common vision, and a committed team, establishing partnerships, creating high-achieving learning environments, and leading and managing change are all aspects of successful leadership. Principals who concentrate on learning shift the focus from intentions to results. Schools organized as professional learning communities benefit both students and staff since the focus is on learning and continuous improvement of the processes that contribute to student learning.

5. Teaching that incorporates what is known about learning, successful grouping and organization to accommodate learning differences, and effective instructional practices is most effective. Teachers who build on students' prior knowledge and meaningful student contexts/cultures, work toward student self-direction and personal efficacy as educational goals, and integrate standards into the curriculum increase student learning. Instructional strategies that enhance student achievement for all students, in all subject areas, at all grade levels, include identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note taking, and reinforcing effort and providing recognition.

6. School climate includes structure, standards, responsibility, recognition, support and commitment. Clear roles and responsibilities for both staff and students, focusing on continuous improvement, encouragement to solve problems, appreciation and recognition for a job well done, trust and mutual support, and a sense of pride in belonging all contribute to a positive school climate.

7. Assessment provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know and can do, and for teachers to use the feedback to adjust their instructional practice. Collecting data from multiple sources and methods and analyzing and interpreting the results lead to decisions based on facts. Accountability is a means of providing evidence to inform decision-making.

8. Professional development must focus on improving student learning and build the school's collective capacity to achieve school-wide goals. Ongoing professional development keeps staff current and enhances teaching capacity in knowledge and skills in the subject(s) taught, pedagogical practices, and emerging technologies. Professional development should include opportunities for other partners to gain knowledge to improve their learning.

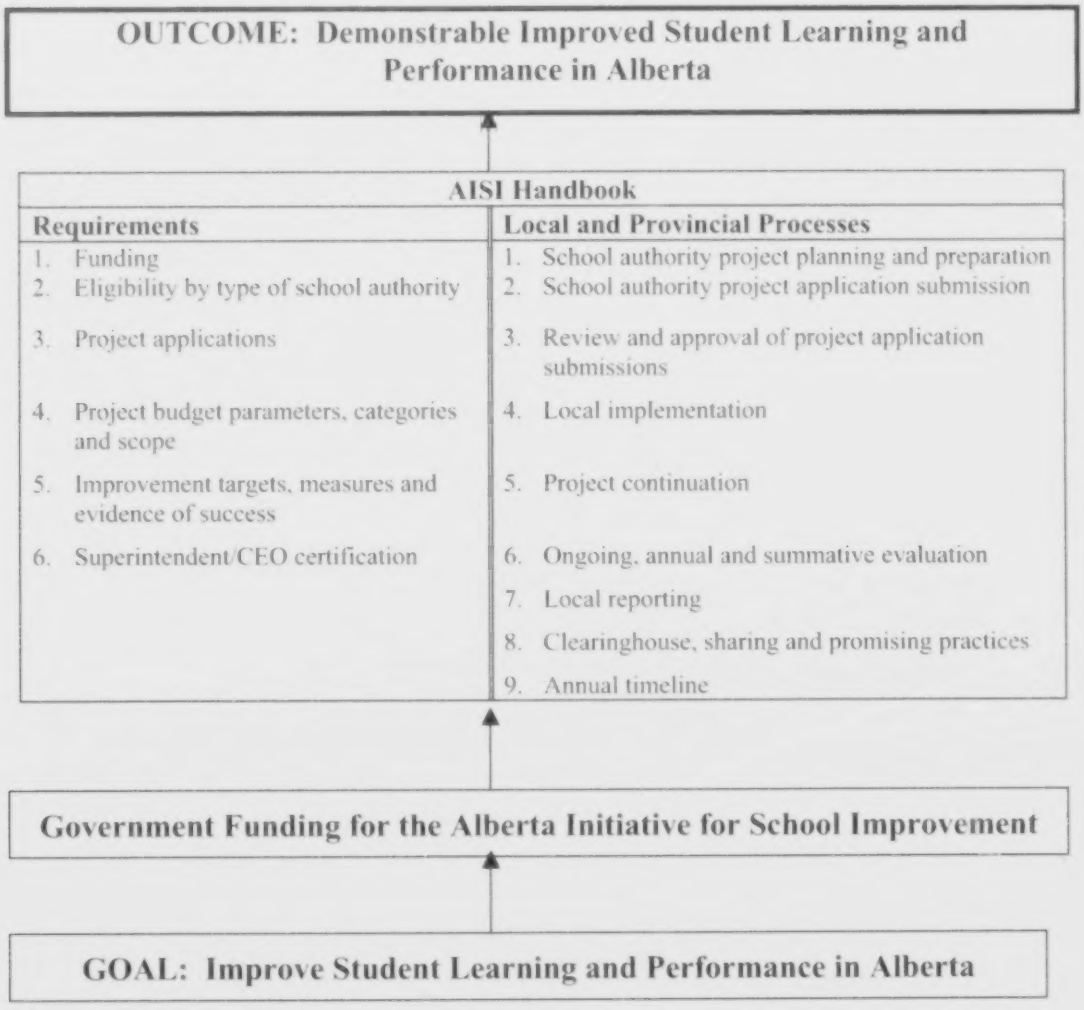
9. Parental engagement in their children's lives and schooling is essential for successful learning. Parenting practices have important effects on children's social and cognitive outcomes. Children do better in school when parents monitor their behavior, are responsive to their needs, and encourage independence. Student learning and performance is improved when parents have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes as members of the AISI partnership characterized by trust, collaboration and teamwork among the education partners.

10. Successful change occurs when participants perceive a need for change, create a common vision and goal, work together to achieve the goal, monitor progress, fine-tune practices based on evidence, and celebrate success. Aligning goals, strategies and measures results in information that is actionable.

Recommended references on pages 20 and 21 of the handbook provide further background information about improving student learning and schools.

III. AISI Requirements and Processes Framework

The following framework assists staff involved in school improvement projects in understanding the what, how, when and who of AISI before commencing planning processes for their improvement projects.


OUTCOME: Demonstrable Improved Student Learning and Performance in Alberta
AISI Handbook
Requirements
1. Funding
2. Eligibility by type of school authority
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4. Project budget parameters, categories and scope
5. Improvement targets, measures and evidence of success
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Local and Provincial Processes
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7. Local reporting
8. Clearinghouse, sharing and promising practices
9. Annual timeline
Government Funding for the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement
GOAL: Improve Student Learning and Performance in Alberta

IV. Project Requirements

This section specifies the requirements related to six areas:

1. Funding
2. Eligibility by type of school authority
3. Project applications
4. Project budget parameters, categories, scope
5. Improvement targets, measures and evidence of success
6. Superintendent/CEO Certification

Refer to the following sections in this handbook for information related to:

1. Local and provincial processes ..... Section V (page 12)
2. Submission forms ..... Section VII (page 19)

1. Funding

1.1 Annual funding will be provided to school authorities for each of the school years 2003 to 2006. $68 million was provided in 2003-2004; approximately $70 million will be provided in 2004-2005.

1.2 The funding entitlement to each eligible school authority for a school year is based upon the previous year's September 30th registered student count (ECS students counted as 0.5 FTE) times the per-pupil rate. The annual per-pupil rate is determined by dividing the total available funding for the year by the total "eligible" provincial enrolment count.

1.3 Funding for the 2003-2004 school year was $120 per registered student for grades 1-12 ($60 for ECS) in public authorities and $72 ($60 for ECS) in private authorities. Funding for the 2004-2005 school year will be $123 per registered FTE student for ECS to grade 12 (ECS is 0.5 FTE) in public authorities and $74 ($62) in private authorities.

1.4 Funding for the first year of projects is based upon approval of project applications by the School Improvement Branch.

1.5 Funding for subsequent school years for multi-year projects is dependent upon school authorities providing evidence of project success to Alberta Learning at the completion of a school year.

1.6 Funding flows to school authorities beginning in September of each school year.

1.7 School authorities may decide to invest additional resources into AISI improvement projects over and above their allocation.

2. Eligibility by Type of School Authority

2.1 AISI funding is available to all Alberta school authorities (public, separate, francophone, charter and private schools) and includes the two Lloydminster school divisions (Alberta Regulation 51/97).

3. Project Applications

3.1 School authorities may utilize AISI funding for school improvement projects for pre-school children and ECS to grade 12 students.

3.2 Each school authority will establish AISI projects that address priorities determined in consultation with its communities. Proposals should reflect the support of those who will implement the projects and should involve the school community, with final decisions being made by the school authority in consideration of their overall direction and needs.

3.3 AISI projects must:

(a) focus on improving student learning and performance (e.g., % of students reading at grade level)

(b) support the improvement of student learning by encouraging teachers, parents and other education partners to work collaboratively to introduce innovative and creative initiatives based upon local needs and circumstances

(c) result in enhancements to regular instructional practices

(d) result in learnings that can be integrated and disseminated after project completion

3.4 The method of allocating AISI funds within a school authority and deciding upon projects to submit for provincial approval is a local decision. Decisions must be made on priorities to meet local needs and circumstances. These needs and circumstances could include:

- district-wide priorities and/or needs (e.g., early literacy, numeracy)
- grade/subject specific needs (e.g., elementary reading, junior high math, high school completion)
- school-specific needs (e.g., high needs students)
- local community needs (e.g., pre-ECS readiness programs for at-risk children)
- a combination of the above

3.5 Authorities can partner with other school authorities to "pool" all or some of their AISI funding.

For example:

- Authorities A and B might share a reading specialist whose salary is paid by A and travel and materials by B (or A and B could share costs 50-50).

- School X in School Authority A could arrange for School Y in Authority B to use its science facilities in exchange for use of Y's fine arts facilities.
- Schools in adjacent authorities could provide joint professional development for their math teachers.

3.6 Authorities can combine their AISI funds with funds from other sources (internal or external) in order to implement larger or more comprehensive projects.

3.7 Projects may have single or multi-year timeframes. A three-year timeframe is preferable for most projects in order to develop meaningful and sustainable improvement in student learning.

3.8 Projects must plan for integrating effective practices after formal completion. Incorporating effective practices is essential in sustaining improved learning.

4. Project Budget Parameters, Categories and Scope

4.1 A school authority may submit one or more individual projects. However, the total funding required cannot exceed the total funding amount available to the authority for the given school year based upon the number of registered students times the AISI per-student rate.

4.2 AISI funds may be used for all appropriate costs associated with the school improvement project, subject to provincial approval of the projects. The guideline for budgets is a minimum of 15% for professional development, approximately 5% for project management and administration, and no more than 10% of AISI funding should be expended on equipment or other capital.

4.3 Authorities are responsible to account for budgets and actual expenditures and to have management systems, processes and procedures in place that meet generally acceptable accounting principles and practices.

4.4 Subject to the following considerations, authorities have a high degree of autonomy and flexibility in designing improvement projects and in allocating resources in order to foster school improvement:

(a) funding shall not be paid as bonuses to staff

(b) per-capita allocations to schools are not allowed

5. Improvement Targets, Measures and Evidence of Success

5.1 Project strategies and measures must be aligned with improvement goals. The types of measures used should be determined by the nature of each improvement project, its expected outcome and the need to provide evidence of improvement. In other words, the measures must be appropriate to the nature of the improvement sought and should not "drive" the project design. Types of measures include:

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Local	• Attendance • Program participation • Local jurisdiction tests • Tests from testing services • *Others to be identified / developed during AISI project development*	• Observation • Portfolios • Case studies • Interviews • Surveys (students, parents, teachers, public) • *Others to be identified / developed during AISI project development*
Provincial	• Provincial achievement tests (grades 3, 6, 9) • Participation rates including off-campus programs • High school completion rates • Diploma exams (grade 12)	• Provincial surveys (students, parents, public)

5.2 AISI measures should focus on outcomes (i.e., student performance). Interim measures and targets may deal with inputs and processes (e.g., percent of teachers who have implemented 75% or more of ICT outcomes).

5.3 The fundamental purpose of measurement is to demonstrate or provide evidence of success for a project based on its impact on student learning. Measures for a project must be appropriate to the focus of each improvement project.

5.4 Projects must have an appropriate balance of local and provincial measures of performance that includes approved quantitative and/or qualitative measures.

(a) All measures proposed by a school authority will be analyzed during the School Improvement Branch review and approval process. Adjustments will be made in collaboration with the school authority.

(b) The approved local and provincial measures will be used to establish the evidence of success in order to determine if funding is to continue into year two and/or year three of multi-year projects.

(c) Use of provincial achievement tests, diploma exams, participation rates and high school completion rates should be made where appropriate and reasonable.

5.5 Since each AISI project reflects the unique needs and circumstances within the school authority, there is no minimum or maximum number of measures. The number of measures should be sufficient to demonstrate "evidence of success" in terms of interim (progress) and final outcomes.

5.6 School authorities should exercise professional judgment to determine the following for each project:

- number of targets (there will normally be one per measure for each year of the project)
- degree of targeted improvement
- the baseline used to determine improvement

5.7 The types of measures used by school authorities should be determined by the nature of the performance, achievement, or indicators necessary to provide evidence of improvement. In other words, the measures must be appropriate to the nature of the improvement sought.

(a) The school authority proposes appropriate provincial and local measures as indicators of evidence of success for the project as part of the project application.

(b) Alberta Learning approves local measures.

(c) Authorities are encouraged to develop measures that reflect the unique nature of both their local circumstances and improvement projects.

5.8 Alberta Learning encourages the use of readily available provincial measures.

Quantitative measures of student learning include the grades 3, 6, and 9 provincial achievement tests, the grade 12 diploma examinations, and others such as participation rates for the achievement tests and diploma exams, which are generated from provincial administrative data.

Qualitative measures to support projects could include the following:

(a) The Accountability Pillar Provincial Surveys for students in grades 4, 7 and 10, their parents and teachers. www.learning.gov.ab.ca/news/2004/February/surveys/

(b) Alberta Learning has the set of survey instruments developed in 1995 for the *Annual Education Results Report*. These questionnaires are available on Alberta Learning's Website at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/educationsystem/satisfaction

(c) The Educational Quality Indicators (EQI) initiative developed measures that are available both from the originating school authorities and Alberta Learning. An abstract may be found in the AISI Annotated Bibliography at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/special/aisi/related.asp

5.9 Other qualitative measures can be found in the education literature and from various researchers and districts currently using qualitative measures. Authorities will likely develop more qualitative measures for their own AISI projects. These will then be shared across the province.

5.10 "Evidence of success" is the net sum professional judgment of provincial and local staff of the amount of movement toward the set improvement target(s) based upon an analysis of all evaluative information on the progress of the project. Multiple data sources and methods are encouraged. A major consideration is that more than one year may be required to achieve success. An apparent decline in a single year may not be a reflection of lack of success but would need to be investigated further by the AISI team.

A common baseline for comparison is the three-year average results for prior performance of similar groups of students. Comparisons on selected measures with similar groups who have not been involved with the program may also be used. In addition to, or in the absence of comparisons, professional judgments, particularly those made by independent observers, may be useful.

5.11 An authority may withdraw a project at any time if it discerns that a project is not meeting with apparent success and submit a new project application with the approval of Alberta Learning.

6. Superintendent/CEO Certification

6.1 Each school authority must report AISI funding in the revenue section of the annual Budget Report and in the revenue and expenditure section of the Audited Financial Statements.

6.2 An AISI Project Annual Report (APAR) shall be submitted by October 15 of each year. The Superintendent/CEO shall certify that: "The information provided in this AISI Project Annual Report (APAR) is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate, reliable and valid. I believe that all AISI requirements have been met." The school authority has the documentation and systems that support the reported information. Parents are involved as partners from inception to completion of the project and are aware of the progress and results.

6.3 School authorities must include a summary of their AISI projects in the *Annual Education Results Report*, due November 30th of each year.

6.4 An AISI Project Final Report (APFR) shall be submitted by October 15 of the final year of a project. The Superintendent/CEO certification is similar to that for the APAR.

6.5 The AISI Project Application Form for new projects is due by April 30th of each year. The Superintendent/CEO shall certify that the project: addresses an identified need; addresses goals, strategies, schools, grades, etc. that are different from those addressed in the previous cycle; has the meaningful involvement of the school community; has the support of those who will implement it; has a research/literature base; has interim measures (for multi-year projects); has improvement targets that are achievable; identifies measures that are reasonable; identifies strategies that have a reasonable chance of achieving the improvement goals and targets; and identifies appropriate evaluation methods.

V. Local and Provincial Processes

There are local and provincial processes in the full AISI cycle that school authorities must consider and apply in each AISI project:

Local Processes

1. School authority project application preparation
2. School authority project application submission
3. Review and approval of project application submissions
4. Local implementation
5. Project continuation
6. Ongoing, annual and summative evaluation
7. Local reporting
8. Clearinghouse, sharing and promising practices
9. Annual timeline

Refer to the following sections in this handbook for information related to:

1. Specific requirements ..... Section IV (page 6)
2. Forms related to project application and annual reporting .....Section VII (page 19)

Provincial Processes

Alberta Learning will undertake its provincial role and responsibilities within the AISI philosophy of openness, collaboration, trust, involvement, simplicity and the framework established by the EPSC. Specifically, the provincial role relates to:

1. Provincial AISI professional development activities and information
2. Review and approval of project applications
3. Funding flow continuity to school authorities using evaluation results and review/appeal processes
4. The Clearinghouse
5. Provincial reporting
6. Coordination and direct assistance to school authorities

1. School Authority Project Planning and Preparation

1.1 School authorities develop school improvement projects from identified needs.

1.2 Project applications reflect insights from current research and literature on school improvement. Alberta university partners have compiled literature synopses related to project themes. These synopses are posted on the AISI Clearinghouse.

1.3 Alberta Learning has established an annotated bibliography on school improvement on the AISI website to assist schools in identifying improvement research and literature. School authorities and the university Faculties of Education, as part of the AISI collaborative philosophy, have all contributed to the information base.

1.4 Every school authority develops its own policies, criteria, priorities, and selection processes for AISI projects within its own philosophy and preferences. (Note: some of the considerations are identified in Sections III and IV of this handbook).

1.5 As collaboration is an essential element for school improvement, project applications must reflect support of those who will implement the projects and include meaningful involvement of the school community. In addition to students, staff and families, school community includes school councils and agencies providing school services that affect the ability of children to be successful learners.

1.6 Each project application must include a budget. The sum of the school authority's request submitted to Alberta Learning for funding approval cannot exceed the total school authority AISI funding entitlement. All designated AISI funds must be expended on AISI projects. If a school authority decides to fund a project beyond the provincial AISI funding, that should be specified in the submission.

It is recognized that school improvement is not a "quick fix" activity, but rather an ongoing process that requires collaboration, commitment, and sustained support. AISI's requirements of budgeting, reporting and accountability are an attempt to promote long-term efficiency and effectiveness, not short-term change.

1.7 School authorities must provide professional development as it is essential to the school improvement process.

1.8 The requirement to reflect school improvement research as foundational to project development and implementation ensures there is a strong possibility for success.

1.9 There is an apparent tension between the need for "bottom-up" and "top-down" processes including consultation and commitment, and the need for overall authority planning and decision-making on priorities. These are not necessarily contradictory. In order to be successful, projects must be based on support at the school and community level. At the same time, the school authority must make the final decision about the overall direction and allocation of resources, in light of local context and identified needs of its school authority.

1.10 School improvement projects should be identified, planned and designed to meet local needs and circumstances. These could be:

- district-wide priorities and/or needs (e.g., early literacy, high school completion)
- grade/subject specific needs (e.g., elementary reading, junior high math, music in multiple grades)
- school-specific needs (e.g., high needs students, low attendance)
- a combination of the above

2. School Authority Project Application Submission

2.1 The School Improvement Branch of Alberta Learning must receive submissions for new projects no later than April 30th of each year; years 2 and 3 of multi-year projects need not be resubmitted for approval.

2.2 AISI projects are to be linked to the school authority's three-year planning and reporting processes. See the *Guide for School Board Planning and Reporting*.

2.3 The School Authority Individual Project Application Form (Word Template Version) to be submitted by each school authority is displayed in Section VII of this handbook.

2.4 As part of the accountability process, the Superintendent/CEO must certify that the project meets requirements. See Section IV.

3. Review and Approval of Project Application Submissions

3.1 Alberta Learning's School Improvement Branch (SIB) is responsible for reviewing and approving project application submissions from school authorities (see section VII).

3.2 SIB undertakes its provincial role and responsibilities within a philosophy of openness, collaboration, trust, involvement, simplicity and the framework established by the AISI Education Partners Steering Committee.

3.3 SIB provides project approval criteria to school authorities.

3.4 SIB seeks clarification from school authorities and requests revisions as necessary.

3.5 SIB makes a decision on project approval and notifies the school authority through the AISI extranet system.

3.6 If there are significant areas of concern with a project, Alberta Learning works to resolve the outstanding issue(s) by consulting with the school authority and clearly identifying the required revisions.

3.7 If a project application is rejected, the school authority may request Alberta Learning reviewers to provide a second review.

4. Local Implementation

4.1 Local planning, implementation, and ongoing support and assessment are critical to the success of each school improvement project. Many sound initiatives fail during implementation because they are taken for granted and not sufficiently supported. The success of a school improvement project depends on appropriate involvement of education partners in the design and implementation of the project, and ongoing support, both at the school and district levels.

4.2 Each project should have an implementation strategy with sufficient dedicated resources to adequately support the project.

5. Project Continuation

5.1 Alberta Learning will approve funding for multi-year projects to flow in the second and third years based upon demonstrated evidence of success. Funding will not continue in subsequent years for multi-year projects if the professional judgment of Alberta Learning and school authority staff indicates the project was unsuccessful.

5.2 Funding for project applications submitted and/or approved after September 1 will commence in the month following approval and may include "retroactive" funding if that was included in the project application budget and Alberta Learning decision process.

6. Ongoing, Annual and Summative Evaluation

6.1 School authorities decide upon their ongoing, annual and summative measurement and evaluation policies and processes as part of their planning, management and assessment practices.

6.2 School authorities should make provision for ongoing evaluation on a natural cycle (e.g., quarterly or other regular basis decided by the school authority) comparing the baseline and targets (both interim and final outcome) to actual progress.

6.3 A project summary should be included in the *Annual Education Results Report* (AERR) due by November 30.

6.4 Evaluation practices should meet professional standards and be done in accordance with the targets, measures and evidence of success described in Section IV of this handbook.

7. Local Reporting

The following reporting requirements exist.

Financial Reports A line item in: • Annual Budget Report • Audited Financial Statements	 April 30 November 30
Project Application	April 30
AISI Project Annual Report (APAR)/ AISI Project Final Report (APFR)	October 15
Annual Education Results Report (AERR)	November 30

8. Clearinghouse, Sharing and Promising Practices

8.1 Alberta Learning has established, with its partners, the process and mechanism for a provincial electronic AISI Clearinghouse that includes information such as project descriptions, findings, results, conclusions and promising practices.

8.2 Each school authority annually provides information on its AISI projects such as findings, results, conclusions and promising practices to the provincial AISI Clearinghouse so that successes and non-successes can be shared.

8.3 The AISI EPSC coordinates and/or organizes various sharing "venues" and mechanisms such as partners' meetings and conferences/conventions including:

- Teachers' Conventions
- ASBA Annual General Meetings
- AHSCA Parent Conference/Annual General Meeting
- AISI Conference

9. Annual Timeline

Provincial	Local	Date
Ministerial announcement that Cycle 2 funding confirmed		January 30, 2003
AISI updates by SIB to school authorities relating to Cycle 2		February to April
Deadline for new project submissions		April 30
Review and approval of new project applications		May to October
	Planning project implementation	May to June
	Project implementation begins	August to September
	Submit APAR/APFR	October 15
SIB reviews and approves APARs/APFRs		October to December
Scheduled regional workshops		Fall/Spring
	Development of local project guidelines, priorities, etc.	February to April
	Needs assessment, literature reviews, community consultation	
	Project planning	
	Local selection of projects and project application preparation	
	Submission of AERR which includes AISI summary	November 30
Preparation of provincial report		December to March
	Design and develop new projects to replace single year projects (if any)	February to March
Funding payments (monthly) to school authorities for approved projects	Ongoing project implementation	September to August
SIB visitations		Spring
	Submit new single year projects – only if initial projects were not all multi-year	March to April
CYCLE REPEATS		

Empty cells indicate no activity.

VI. Alberta Learning Contacts and Assistance

For assistance contact the School Improvement Branch of Alberta Learning.

Contact	Phone	Fax
SIB Office	(780) 427-3160	(780) 415-2481
Address:	School Improvement Branch 12th Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard 10044 – 108 Street Edmonton, Alberta T5J 5E6	

VII. Forms

1. School Authority Project Application Form (proposal)
2. AISI Project Annual Report (APAR)
3. AISI Project Final Report (APFR)

Current word template versions of these forms are maintained in the AISI Extranet Site: https://phoenix.edc.gov.ab.ca/login/default.asp

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Appendix: Aligning Goals, Strategies and Measures

Goal	Strategies	Measures	Baseline	Target	Actual	Number
To improve individual student reading level in grade 1, 2, and 3 to 82% or greater, in 2004 **Outcome** All students at grade 3 will read at or above grade level	1. Balanced Literacy Model 2. Picture-word inductive model	Gates-McGinite reading test for grade 1	80% of grade 1 students are ≥ grade level Based on three-year average 2001-2003 of grade 1 students in school.	82%	83% Exceeded target; strategies worked as expected.	50
The table illustrates how goals, strategies, outcomes and measures are aligned. 1. The goal of improving reading is to be achieved by using two strategies. 2. The Gates-McGinite reading tests are used for students in grades 1 and 2 while the English language arts PAT reading subtest is used at grade 3. 3. Baselines are three-year averages for the achievement measures; as the parent survey is new, the first-year actual will serve as the baseline. 4. Improvement targets have been set at 2% over the baseline. 5. Reading increased for grades 1 and 3, but did not meet the target for grade 2. Grade 2 teachers will increase the amount of reading practice next year. 6. 85% of the parents of grades 1 to 3 students responded to the survey about their child's reading.		Gates-McGinite reading test for grade 2	75% of grade 2 students are ≥ grade level Based on three-year average 2001-2003 of grade 2 students in school.	77%	76% Did not meet target. Will increase the amount of reading practice next year.	48
		Grade 3 ELA PAT reading subtest	78% of grade 3 students are ≥ the Acceptable Standard. Based on three-year average 2001-2003 of grade 3 students in school.	80%	81% Exceeded target.	54
		Parent survey (15-item survey of child's reading performance, frequency, and enjoyment	TBD in first year of project.	90%	90% Overall 90% of parents reported their child was reading better, more often, and enjoyed reading.	128 Response rate of 85% (128/150)

Alberta Initiative for School Improvement

PART II

Framework for the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement

Prepared by

The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement
Education Partners Steering Committee

December 1999

Framework
for the

Alberta Initiative
for
School Improvement

Prepared by

AISI

The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement
Education Partners Steering Committee

December 1999

CASS

Alberta
School Boards
Association

AHSCA

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Available on the internet: http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/sib/aisi

Preamble

Parents, teachers and Albertans care deeply about how our children do in schools. By working together in our school communities, we can help children do even better. We are striving for a culture of continuous improvement for our children and for ourselves as we help them to be successful as learners.

The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement is a bold approach to supporting the improvement of student learning by encouraging teachers, parents and the community to work collaboratively to introduce innovative and creative initiatives. By drawing on solid educational research in developing plans to meet improvement goals, school communities can implement programs that enhance student learning and result in improvements for students. To accomplish these ends in their jurisdictions, the initiative is supported by $38 million of provincial funding in 2000/2001 and $66 million in 2001/2002 which translates into $66M for the 2000/2001 school year and $66M for the 2001/2002 school year. The 2002/2003 government budget will be approved and announced in the spring of 2000.

Alberta's students already produce world-class results. Through this grassroots initiative, we are providing resources so that our students will do even better. In doing so, AISI will help to demonstrate that Alberta's public education system is a key component of the "Alberta Advantage."

NOTE: The reader is referred to the companion document entitled *AISI Administrative Handbook, December 20, 1999* for AISI program and implementation details that is available upon request from the School Improvement Branch (SIB) of Alberta Learning (telephone: [780] 427-3160; fax: [780] 422-0576) or from the Alberta Learning website: www.learning.gov.ab.ca/sib/aisi

Executive Summary

AISI is an extension of Alberta's accountability framework that has been in place since the early 1990s. Since November 1996, school boards have been required to report to their publics how well their students are performing on the provincial assessments and a variety of other measures outlined in their three-year education plans. AISI provides funding to school jurisdictions for specific local initiatives and research to improve student learning and performance, that is in addition to the basic school grants.

AISI funding is $38M in the 2000/2001 fiscal year and $66M in the 2001/2002 fiscal year which translates into $66M for each of the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 school years. School jurisdictions will receive AISI program details in late December 1999 for implementation in the 2000/2001 school year, with proposals being submitted by school jurisdictions commencing in March 2000.

The essence of the plan follows:

Goal To improve student learning and performance by fostering initiatives which reflect the unique needs and circumstances within school jurisdictions.

Principles

#1: Funding will flow to school jurisdictions and charter schools based upon approved proposals for improving student learning and performance.

#2: Proposals can be multi-year (maximum of 3 years) but must have interim (at least annual) progress measurement targets. Continued funding depends upon evidence of success.

#3: Funding consisting of an equal amount per registered FTE (Full Time Equivalent) student will be based upon the previous year's September 30th count.

#4: The jurisdiction proposal needs to be linked to and become part of the current three-year planning and reporting process for purposes of the school jurisdiction's annual planning, reporting and accountability processes.

#5: There will be an appropriate balance of local and provincial measures of performance that includes approved quantitative and/or qualitative measures.

#6: Project results will be shared with Alberta school jurisdictions and others while Alberta Learning will act as the "clearinghouse" on behalf of all partners.

Key Considerations

(1) Given that collaboration is an essential element for school improvement, proposals should reflect support of those who will implement the projects and include meaningful involvement of the school community.
(2) Proposals should reflect insights from research and literature on improvement.
(3) Each project proposal must include a budget. The sum of the school jurisdiction's projects cannot exceed the total school jurisdiction funding entitlement.
(4) School jurisdictions may phase out projects and submit new proposals with provincial approval.
(5) Funding shall not be paid as bonuses.
(6) With reference to "measures", the appropriate balance is 60% locally determined and 40% provincially determined.

Acknowledgements

The design and development of the AISI framework has been through a collaborative effort of six education partners with 15 individual representatives. In addition to acknowledging and thanking each partner for committing time and resources to this priority initiative, we also want to thank and acknowledge the "employing" organizations:

- Alberta Home and School Councils' Association
- Alberta Learning
- Alberta School Boards Association
- Alberta Teachers' Association
- Association of School Business Officials of Alberta
- College of Alberta School Superintendents
- Mistahia Health Region
- Northern Lights School Division #69
- Red Deer Public School District #104

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A. Introduction and Purpose of this AISI Framework Paper

The Government of Alberta has allocated $38M in the 2000/2001 fiscal year and $66M in the 2001/2002 fiscal year for the improvement of student learning and performance in Alberta schools. In June 1999, Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Learning, announced that the program for improving student learning and performance will be jointly developed between Alberta Learning and education partners.

The purpose of this document is to outline the framework for the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement that has been developed through a collaborative process among the six education partners including Alberta Learning, as well as consultation with others. As a result, there is a high level of commitment by the partners to AISI and its outcomes. The program is scheduled for province-wide introduction in January 2000 with implementation by Alberta school jurisdictions and charter schools in September 2000. Funding for school jurisdictions and charter schools is $66M for the 2000/2001 school year and $66M for 2001/2002 school year. The six participating partners will be involved in the design, development, implementation, administration and evaluation phases and processes throughout the duration of AISI. The outcomes of this bold and flexible province-wide collaborative development will be the introduction of many creative, innovative and exciting projects that will result in meaningful and sustainable improvement in student learning and performance.

B. Background

On March 11, 1999, the Government of Alberta announced, through the Budget and Business Planning process, the introduction of a newly created School Performance Incentive Program (SPIP) for schools; $38M was allocated in the Government's 2000-2001 fiscal year as a pilot project while $66M was allocated as full funding for year two. As a result of feedback from stakeholders in terms of both the program and development process, Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Learning, placed SPIP "on hold" on June 9, 1999 and immediately commenced a process of consultation with key stakeholders.

On July 14, 1999, Maria David-Evans, Alberta Learning Deputy Minister, invited five key partners to participate in a collaborative process to develop a program to improve student learning and performance in Alberta. Each partner association could appoint two representatives. The partner associations all accepted the invitation and appointed two representatives.

Partners	Representatives
Alberta Teachers' Association	Larry Booi and Charles Hyman
Alberta Home & School Councils' Association	Christine Ayling and Marilyn Fisher
Alberta School Boards Association	Lois Byers and Leroy Sloan
Association of School Business Officials of Alberta	Deb Beck and Susan Lang
College of Alberta School Superintendents	Len Luders and Ed Wittchen
Alberta Learning	Maria David-Evans, Jim Brackenbury, Jim Dueck, Nelly McEwen, John Myroon

The first meeting, which was held on August 26, 1999, resulted in:

- Dr. Lyle Oberg, sharing his perspective on the initiative including the provision of some "givens" which are included in Appendix B of this report and providing answers to a series of key questions,
- consensus on how the collaborative process will be undertaken including the Deputy Minister as the Chair of the AISI Education Partners Steering Committee, and
- preliminary draft of some program principles.

The second meeting, which was held on September 9, 1999, resulted in the following products and decisions:

- initiative to be called the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI),
- AISI goal statement,
- AISI framework principles,
- AISI framework key considerations, and
- next steps, which included the development of a draft report.

The third meeting, which was held on September 21, 1999, resulted in the following products and decisions:

- "fine-tuning" and revision of principles and considerations,
- approval-in-principle of a draft report with revisions, and
- official appointment of a Working Group and approval of the Terms of Reference for the Working Group to develop program details.

The fourth meeting, which was held on October 1, 1999, approved the draft framework paper that was used for consultation with and feedback from the Alberta education community.

The November 6, 1999 meeting of the Education Partners Steering Committee resulted in:

- reviewing and analyzing the feedback from the partner constituents, stakeholders and the November 5, 1999 CASS Issues Forum, and
- revising the October 1 Draft Framework Paper based upon feedback.

The November 6 and 7, 1999 meeting of the Education Partners Working Group resulted in:

- a series of AISI "requirements" and "provincial and local process" decisions that will formulate the first draft of the AISI program details, and
- a revised set of milestones including advancement of the AISI dissemination process timeline by two months.

The November 18, 1999 meeting of the AISI Education Partners Steering Committee resulted in the approval of the final framework paper which is dated December 1999.

Standing Policy Committee of the Alberta Government approved the AISI program on December 7, 1999, while Cabinet gave final approval on December 14, 1999.

Finally, the *AISI Administrative Handbook* of December 20, 1999, along with the December 1999 AISI framework paper will be provided to school jurisdictions and charter schools in late December 1999.

C. Alberta Initiative for School Improvement Framework

1. Goal

To improve student learning and performance by fostering initiatives which reflect the unique needs and circumstances within school jurisdictions.

2. Principles

Principle #1: Funding will flow to school jurisdictions and charter schools based upon approved proposals for improving student learning and performance.

Principle #2: Proposals can be multi-year (maximum of 3 years) but must have interim (at least annual) progress measurement targets. Continued funding depends upon evidence of success.

Principle #3: Funding consisting of an equal amount per registered FTE (Full Time Equivalent) student will be based upon the previous year's September 30th count.

Principle #4: The jurisdiction proposal needs to be linked to and become part of the three-year planning and reporting process for purposes of the school jurisdiction's annual planning, reporting and accountability processes.

Principle #5: There will be an appropriate balance of local and provincial measures of performance that includes approved quantitative and/or qualitative measures.

Principle #6: Project results will be shared with Alberta school jurisdictions and others while Alberta Learning will act as the "clearinghouse" on behalf of all partners.

3. Key Considerations

(1) Given that collaboration is an essential element for school improvement, proposals should reflect support of those who will implement the projects and include meaningful involvement of the school community.

(2) Proposals should reflect insights from research and literature on improvement.

(3) Each project proposal must include a budget. The sum of the school jurisdiction's projects cannot exceed the total school jurisdiction funding entitlement.

(4) School jurisdictions may phase out projects and submit new proposals with provincial approval.

(5) Funding shall not be paid as bonuses.

(6) With reference to "measures", the appropriate balance is 60% locally determined and 40% provincially determined.

4. Clarifications

(1) School Community

In addition to students, staff and families, school community includes school councils and agencies providing school services that affect the ability of children to be successful learners.

(2) Nature of School Improvement

It is recognized that school improvement is not a "quick fix" activity, but rather an ongoing process that requires collaboration, commitment, and sustained support. AISI's requirements of budgeting, reporting and accountability are an attempt to promote long-term efficiency and effectiveness, not short-term changes.

(3) Funding

Boards need a high degree of autonomy and flexibility in allocating resources in order to foster school improvement which meets local needs, subject to the following considerations:

(a) funding will not be paid as staff bonuses,
(b) per-capita allocations to schools are discouraged,
(c) administrative costs are legitimate, and
(d) professional development costs are appropriate.

(4) Professional Development/Staff Training

School jurisdictions should recognize the importance of professional development in the school improvement process.

(5) School Improvement Research and Literature

The requirement to reflect research insights is not meant to discourage innovation but rather to ensure that there is a strong possibility for success.

(6) Jurisdiction and School Improvement

There is an apparent tension between the need for "bottom-up" and "top-down" processes including consultation and commitment, and the need for overall jurisdiction planning and decisions on priorities. But these are not necessarily contradictory. In order to be successful, projects must be based on support at the school and community level. At the same time, the school jurisdiction must make the final decision about the overall direction and allocation of resources, in light of the situation and needs which prevail in its school system.

(7) Measures

In general, the types of measures used should be determined by the nature of the performance, achievement, or indicators necessary to provide evidence of improvement. In other words, the measures must be appropriate to the nature of the improvement sought.

(a) The school jurisdiction proposes appropriate provincial and local measures as indicators of evidence of success for the project as part of the proposal.

(b) Alberta Learning must approve both "provincially determined" and "locally determined" measures.

(c) "Provincially determined" measures may be quantitative or qualitative, depending on the nature of the improvement sought.

(d) Alberta Learning may choose to adopt local measures as provincially determined measures and jurisdictions may use provincial measures as locally determined measures.

(e) Jurisdictions are encouraged to develop measures to reflect the unique nature of both their local circumstances and improvement projects.

D. Milestones

	Activity	Target Date
1.	Partners share information with constituents and obtain their feedback and responses	September 23 – Oct. 25/99
2.	Package prepared and sent to stakeholders	October 1, 1999
3.	Prepare Ministerial Report (MR)	October 27, 1999
4.	Receive input from stakeholder associations/groups	November 1, 1999
5.	Review consolidated feedback from stakeholder associations and constituents of the 6 partners, revise framework paper and develop AISI program parameters and requirements	November 6 & 7, 1999
6.	Education Partners Steering Committee review and approve revised framework paper and review "first cut" administrative parameters and requirements	November 18, 1999
7.	AISI EPSC and EPWG provide comments on draft administrative handbook to the School Improvement Branch	December 3, 1999
8.	SPC review and recommendation	December 7, 1999
9.	Prepare draft AISI program administrative details and school jurisdiction and charter school dissemination package	December 8, 1999
10.	AISI EPSC review and approve final: - Administrative Handbook, and - dissemination package	December 13, 1999
11.	Cabinet review and approval	December 14, 1999
12.	Partners News Release	December 15, 1999
13.	School jurisdiction packages disseminated	December 23, 1999
14.	Commence provincial inservice presentations on AISI	January 10, 2000
15.	School jurisdictions submit proposals to Alberta Learning	March 1 to April 15, 2000
16.	Review (modify if required) and approve proposals (maximum of 6 week turnaround time after proposal receipt)	May 15, 2000
17.	School level implementation and start funding flow	September 2000
18.	Start Post Implementation Review	Spring 2003

Appendix A

"Questions & Answers" Within the Framework Context

Introduction

The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement design and development to date, has resulted in a framework which includes a goal statement, six principles, six key considerations and seven clarifications. Program details are available in the companion document entitled *December 20, 1999 AISI Administrative Handbook*. Therefore, the following set of Q&As serve to identify typical questions the reader may have but you are referred to the AISI *Administrative Handbook* for more details.

1. General

Question 1: **Why is the project called the "Alberta Initiative for School Improvement?**

Answer *The name was changed to reflect the fundamental shift from incentives to school improvement.*

Question 2: **Do school jurisdictions have to participate in AISI?**

Answer *No, participation is entirely voluntary.*

Question 3: **How will this initiative promote school improvement?**

Answer *Each school jurisdiction will discuss with parents, teachers, school administrators and others, ways that schools can be improved and will identify needs. Based on research about how to meet those needs, jurisdictions will develop programs, in consultation with the school community, to utilize insights of participants. In each instance, the project will utilize solid research and "grassroots" collaboration to improve schools.*

Question 4: **What is the likely sequence of events for development, submission, approval and funding of school improvement projects?**

Answer *School jurisdictions will determine their internal processes for identifying and developing projects. Provincial guidelines for school jurisdiction proposal submissions will be available in early January 2000. School jurisdictions will submit their proposal, which is a listing and consolidation of each individual project, to Alberta Learning commencing in March 2000. Funding of approved projects will flow with the start of the 2000/2001 school year.*

2. Funding

Question 5: **How much money is available to a school jurisdiction?**

Answer *Provincially, there is $38 million available in the 2000/2001 fiscal year and $66 million in the 2001/2002 fiscal year. The 2002/2003 government budget will be approved and announced in the spring of 2000. On a school-year basis this translates to $66M for each of the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 school years. On a per capita basis, this means a maximum of "x" per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) registered student (as of September 30 of the previous year) in each school jurisdiction in the 2000/2001 school year (year 1) and "y" in the 2001/2002 school year (year 2).*

Based on the September 30, 1998 student count of 551,006 registered students (illustrative purposes only), this would mean about $120.00 per student ($66M ÷ 551,006) in each school year.

Question 6: **Is it possible to use the funding to reward participants in the form of salary bonuses or similar payments?**

Answer *No. The partners have agreed that all of the money for this project is to go to school improvement and that no bonuses will be paid.*

Question 7: **Can boards "partner" with other school jurisdictions to "pool" some of their AISI funding in order to have teachers from more than one school jurisdiction engage in the same or similar improvement project?**

Answer *Yes, they can. It might complicate the funding allocation and accounting systems but details can be worked out by the partners.*

Question 8: **Can boards combine their AISI funds with funds from other sources (internal or external) in order to initiate larger/more comprehensive projects?**

Answer *Yes, they can but it would be necessary to ensure accounting integrity from both sources.*

Question 9: **Can a portion of the AISI funds be used for governance and administration of school improvement projects?**

Answer *Yes, AISI funds can be used for all appropriate costs associated with the school improvement project.*

Question 10: **Can boards distribute AISI funds on a per-capita basis to each school?**

Answer *Any such proposal would require a clear indication of how every school would meet the AISI criteria for approval.*

While the method of allocating AISI funds and deciding upon projects is a local choice, a guideline is that funding should be allocated on the basis of specific projects for "local unique needs and circumstances" rather than an equal per student per school basis. For example:

- *District-wide priorities and/or needs (e.g., early literacy, class size)*
- *Grade/subject specific needs (e.g., elementary reading, junior high math, high school completion)*
- *School-specific needs (e.g., high needs students)*
- *A combination of the above*

3. Process

Question 11: **How many projects can a jurisdiction have?**

Answer *The number of jurisdiction-sponsored projects is a decision for each school jurisdiction. A school jurisdiction's proposal to Alberta Learning can contain multiple individual projects. However, the total funding cannot exceed the total amount available to the jurisdiction.*

Question 12: **Can a school submit its own proposal to the province for approval?**

Answer *No. School jurisdictions submit the school improvement projects they want funded to the province.*

Question 13: **What must school jurisdictions do to demonstrate that these projects have the support of school communities (including parents, teachers, school administrators and others)?**

Answer *Each school jurisdiction is expected to develop a process to involve school communities in the identification of improvement goals and the development of plans to meet those goals based on solid research. The process cannot be "top down" and should involve, as appropriate, parents, teachers, school administrators and others.*

Question 14: **School improvement is usually a long-term process. Can these projects be for multiple years?**

Answer *Yes. However, there must be interim measures and evidence of success in order to obtain continued funding after year one.*

Question 15: ➢ **How will parents and school councils be involved in project creation and implementation at their school?**

Answer ➢ *School community involvement may range from needs identification and project creation to planning and implementation depending on the project.*

Question 16: ➢ **On what basis will these projects be approved provincially?**

Answer ➢ *Approval will be based on meeting criteria, which include a research base, involvement of school communities and use of appropriate measures or indicators of performance.*

➢ **Can an improvement project that was started in 1999/2000 or earlier be funded through AISI?**

Answer ➢ *Yes it can, as long as the project is an improvement project that meets AISI guidelines.*

Question 17: ➢ **What measures will be used to demonstrate school improvement?**

Answer ➢ *Measures or indicators can be either qualitative or quantitative and the evidence of success must be verifiable. Sixty percent of the measures of the proposal will be locally determined and 40 percent will be provincially determined.*

Question 18: ➢ **What does "evidence of success" mean?**

Answer ➢ *"Evidence of success" is the net sum professional judgement of provincial and local staff of the amount of project movement toward the set improvement target(s) based upon an analysis of all evaluative information about the progress of the project. The use of multiple data sources and methods is encouraged. Generally speaking, evidence of success should indicate a positive trend. A major consideration is that more than one year may be required to achieve success.*

Question 19: ➢ **What happens if a school jurisdiction discerns that a project may be failing?**

Answer ➢ *The jurisdiction can withdraw the project and submit a new proposal with the approval of Alberta Learning.*

Question 20: **What provincial measures will Alberta Learning use?**

Answer *Alberta Learning encourages the use of readily available measures.*

***Quantitative** measures include the grades 3, 6, 9 achievement tests and the grade 12 diploma examinations, and others such as participation rates, which can be generated from provincial administrative data.*

*While Alberta Learning has no **qualitative** measures at the school jurisdiction or school level, some sources where qualitative measures could be available follow.*

(a) Alberta Learning has the set of survey instruments developed in 1995 for the Annual Education Results Report. These questionnaires are available from the Planning Branch.
(b) The Educational Quality Indicators (EQI) initiative developed measures that are available both from the originating school jurisdictions and the department.
(c) Other qualitative measures can be found in the education literature and from various researchers and districts currently using qualitative measures.
(d) More qualitative measures will likely be developed by jurisdictions for their own AISI projects. These will then be shared across the province.
(e) Alberta Learning could "adopt" or accept local qualitative measures as provincial measures.
(f) Alberta Learning could develop qualitative measures.

Question 21: **How will accountability be linked to a jurisdiction's education plan and results report?**

Answer *The Three-year Planning and Reporting Process has specific requirements including submission dates, provincial measures, and government priorities. Linking the AISI projects to the annual accountability cycle facilitates good planning, reporting, and decision making in that a process is already in place. Local measures developed for AISI can then also be reported to the public through a jurisdiction's Annual Education Results Report (AERR).*

*The AISI **does not** replace the AERR process. Jurisdictions must continue to report on all of the measures outlined in the* Guide for School Board Planning and Reporting 1999 *on an annual basis. However, jurisdictions must engage in the evaluation of each AISI project to provide evidence of success that would then become part of the annual AISI report, which would be summarized in the AERR.*

4. Partner Involvement

Question 22: ➢ **How will the education partners be involved in the initiative as it evolves?**

Answer ➢ *At the provincial level, a steering committee of education partners will oversee the initiative.*

Question 23: ➢ **What happens if a project or group of projects is not acceptable to Alberta Learning?**

Answer ➢ *Alberta Learning will work collaboratively with the school jurisdiction to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution.*

Question 24: ➢ **What involvement will school councils have at the jurisdictional decision making level?**

Answer ➢ *The school board is responsible to ensure continued input from "grassroots" school communities.*

Question 25: ➢ **Where can I get more detailed information?**

Answer ➢ *The companion document entitled* AISI Administrative Handbook, December 20, 1999 *provides AISI program and implementation details.*

➢ *Further information and the December 1999,* AISI Framework Paper *and the* AISI Administrative Handbook *are available from the Alberta School Improvement Branch (telephone: [780] 427-3160; fax [780] 422-0576) of Alberta Learning or on the Alberta Learning website: www.learning.gov.ab.ca/sib/aisi*

Appendix B

Minister's Perspective on Fundamental Principles of Performance-Based Funding and Consultation Process Expectations and Outcomes; August 26, 1999

Expected Outcomes of the Consultation Process

1. The development of a program that improves student performance and learning.
2. Establishment of a solid foundation of trust between government and stakeholder groups.
3. Creation of a model for future collaboration.
4. Establishment of accountability measures and criteria providing evidence that the initiative works.
5. The expectation that the initiative will be continually improved.

Fundamental Principles for a Performance Based Funding Initiative

1. Funding will flow to jurisdictions based on performance and learning. At the same time, the need to provide seed money to support new programs is recognized.
2. There must be an appropriate balance struck between provincial and locally determined measures of performance.
3. The program will focus on and reward jurisdictional improvement over past performance.
4. Successful programs must be transferable Alberta-wide.

Expectations for the Consultation Process

1. Sufficient time exists to ensure that the consultation process and associated initiative will be done well. The $38 million earmarked for the first year of the performance program will only be available in fiscal 2000 with $66 million being made available the following fiscal year.
2. Because the program will likely differ significantly from the original SPIP, the Minister will take this initiative back to SPC for approval.
3. Consultation will extend beyond our primary stakeholders to include other interested parties (e.g., Premier's Council on Persons with Disabilities).